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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/WE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/05/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: A/S FRIED'S MEETING WITH SPANISH DG PONS ON
MARGINS OF OSCE MADRID MINISTERIAL NOVEMBER 28

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. Assistant Secretary Fried and Spanish Director General for Europe and North America Pepe Pons met briefly on November 28 to review OSCE activities and other bilateral issues. The Spanish received our messages regarding the need to protect the integrity of the OSCE and its institutions, particularly ODIHR, in the face of destructive proposals. Pons described strong support among OSCE members for the U.S. position on CFE. With regard to Kosovo, Pons believed the Russian delegation might agreed to a month by month renewal option. Pons pitched the Spanish view that future OSCE management required a stronger organizational structure to deal with the complexities of the diverse group. END SUMMARY.

CFE

12. (C) On CFE, Pons described strong support for the U.S. position among most OSCE members despite rhetoric from Russia that our position held no merit. Pons characterized Russia's presentation as "shrill" and reiterated Spain's intention as OSCE Chair to continue working toward a solution. Fried expressed his disappointment that CFE was not moving forward at this time, adding that since the Russians chose not to follow-up on new proposals, they held responsibility for putting the control regime at risk.

OHDIR

13. (C) With the current OHDIR drafts in opposition, Pons said the OSCE Chair's strategy was to prepare a third document the night of November 28. The new draft would be based on PrepComm discussions. Fried reminded Pons that the Russians called the OSCE a vulgar organization and said that the Russian draft was so far out of line that this was not a time to develop a half-way compromise. The OSCE should create a new text and take a principled stand supporting the work of OHDIR. Fried recounted a conversation with ODIHR director, Ambassador Christian Strohal, in which he said that ODIHR should make its determinations based on merit, not on political expediencies. Fried also noted that with Kazakhstan issuing public support for the Russian draft, it would be very difficult for the U.S. to support Kazakhstan's bid for the OSCE Chairmanship. The U.S. might have to accept criticism for allowing a dictatorship with a troubling human rights record to assume the OSCE chair, but it was unacceptable to sacrifice the integrity of ODIHR if Kazakhstan did not unequivocally alter their current stance.

OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP

14. (C) With regard to a future Kazakhstan OSCE Chairmanship, Fried related U/S Burns conversation with Kazakh Minister Marat Tazhin November 27 that expressed our view that they needed to break with the Russian ODIHR draft. Pons inquired if the Kazakh letter to the OSCE could be seen as backing away from the Russian position, and Fried said the letter was very weak and did not even use the term ODIHR. When Pons replied that it was unrealistic to believe that the Kazakhs could make a public retraction, Fried countered that Kazakhstan must at least make very strong statements of support for ODIHR. In addition, there should be Kazakh pledges that they would do nothing in the future to weaken the organization. Pons agreed that the Kazakhs had not helped advance their candidacy and noted that Spain had asked to be consulted but only received one hour's notice before the Kazakhs went public with their announcement.

KOSOVO

15. (C) Pons said that it could be possible to get a statement on Kosovo if the U.S. and Russian delegations did not insist on including their bracketed language. After reviewing the texts, Fried said that the U.S. could agree not to put in bracketed text if Russia also agreed. However, Fried emphasized, it was important to be clear about mandate renewal. Pons said renewal was not possible at this time, but that the Russians might consider a month to month renewal option. Fried offered that the U.S. could accept language that "headed in the direction" of renewal and noted that the

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U.S. preferred to use the term "coordinated" process of declaration instead of the alternate "unilateral" process of declaration.

OSCE MANAGEMENT AND STRUCTURE

16. (C) Pons pitched the Spanish view that future OSCE management required a stronger organizational structure to deal with the complexities of the diverse group. Fried responded that the CSCE managed to accomplish all of its objectives while acknowledging that it was a smaller bureaucracy. Agreeing on the need for OSCE reform, Fried said reform needed to bring strength and improvement, not the static, obstructive "reforms" proposed by the Russian delegation. Fried also called for Spanish leadership to ensure that, if a final text could not be negotiated, a shared statement outlining key principles might result as a solution.

17. (U) Meeting Participants with Assistant Secretary Fried and Director General Pons:

Spanish Ambassador to the OSCE Task Force - Jose Angel Lopez
Jorin
Embassy Madrid Charge Hugo Llorens
USOSCE Gary Robbins
USOSCE John Underriner
USOSCE John Van Dreal
Embassy Notetaker Elizabeth Fritschle

18. (U) This cable was cleared by A/S Fried's staff.
AGUIRRE